

Air In the

Paragraph Line

BRAND

A journal of Jon Konrath's writing and other crap
Issue 5/ July 1996

Apocalypse Now starts with no credits, no plot buildup, and no beginning title. I always liked that. Not only was it unconventional, but it was realistic. Life doesn't follow the perfect plot curve, with a buildup, a climax, and a bunch of closure, padded on both sides with credits, notes, and explanations of the unexplainable. Life just isn't as predictable; the interesting bits are too spread out, the problems too interlaced with the joys and boredom. And if they made a film of my life, where would they cast Kevin Bacon, or find a way to insert a love scene every 22.5 minutes?

I've seemed to hook onto a biography kick in my reading diet. Not entirely coincidental, but I read two very large bios back to back: Without Stopping, by and about Paul Bowles, and Literary Outlaw, about William Burroughs and by Ted Morgan. Both were biographies about living people, which meant they had to end at a particular point in time, i.e. when they were written. Both managed to make a semi-integrated stop, with Bowles talking about his settlement in Tangiers, and Morgan wrapping things up with a semi-philosophical rap about how Burroughs has set up shop in Kansas. I liked both approaches better than the typical cheap bio about a rock band, which is usually out of date by an album or two when it gets to the stores, and seems so unfulfilling and hollow when you read it and realize there's 18 months of explosive history missing at the end.

Writing these semi-autobiographical

"fiction" books makes me wonder about the cycle of life, the smoothness when compared to the average Michael Crichton album or John Hughes film. I never know when to end a book, and how to wrap things up in a way that is enticing to the reader, yet isn't compromising to my writing future. I mean, if I write a book about my college experience and it ends with me getting married and moving to the suburbs to sire babies and buy Volvo station wagons, and then my next book shows me out of college dealing heroin and singing in an accordion band, then I think people who read both books will feel ripped off. I'd like to write books that fit together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Of course, the pictures on the pieces won't match at all, and half of the pieces will be missing, but at least the pieces will fit together.

I've spent time outlining my third opus, which will be another novel and will dovetail with my first book, Summer Rain. The outlining and the characters have made me want to go back and edit Rain again, to give it another chance. I've found that spending time away from the manuscript has given me a great deal of power during the second edit, and I can easily spot problems and correct them, much more so than when I was editing immediately after the first draft. I've fallen in love with the story again, and I'm really enjoying the changes and the strength of the new work. The book has always been my baby, and I'm glad to be under the hood again. The first three chapters are my current goal, and they're looking better than ever.

I was worried about the manuscript, because you hear all of these stories about writers writing books in 3 months or 6 months, and there's a new Steven King on the shelves every 5 months and Kerouac wrote On the Road in 20 days. It took me about 6 months to write 100,000 words for Summer Rain, and the manuscript has been kicked around or gathered dust for another 6 months. I got pretty depressed that the book would never get done, or that I was working at some ungodly speed. Then I learned that On the Road was written in 20 days, but took FOUR YEARS to edit. Someone at a

conference told me it ONLY took them four years to go from blank page to galleys with their book. I feel better about my year on blocks with this one.

Everyone's asking me about the second book I hate the fucking second book. It's not a novel, and the only parts that other people liked are the part that I hated and have already cut from the manuscript. 95% of the book is an inside joke, the writing is primitive, and it'll take a lot of work to get it to the point where agents would send me rejection slips that don't have explosives attached. It's going to sit for a while, maybe a long while. Maybe in 6 months, I'll start editing it again and I'll love it. It won't be the first time I've done something I said I wouldn't do.

I haven't been writing as much as I should because I just changed jobs. I don't usually talk about my 9 to 5 work, but my current job has just been going downhill fast, and the changes are too embedded in my daily life to ignore them. The company stock is going through the floor, the management is floundering, and many people are leaving. All of my projects were getting cut, there were daily re-orgs, and I didn't know who my boss was anymore. was time to dress like a lady and head for the lifeboats. I hooked up with a recruiter, and he got me into a new place within a few weeks. The new job is closer to my house, and every aspect of it is just better. More money, more benefits, better work, nice people, and incredible offices. I liked the atmosphere a lot, and I'm hoping it works out.

About the last job's business model: I have this theory about the Internet market, loosely based on a theory Douglas Adams put into motion in one of his books about shoes. See, as more companies launch their Internet services and convince everyone in the world that they need to use the Internet, more people will use the services. But, the companies will stumble to conquer the market and deliver more Internet service to people, and they will in turn create more fragmented, shoddy Internet services. This will cause a higher demand for Internet service, because people will be pissed off with their ISPs and will switch to other ISPs. The higher

Fills the room with an effective insecticide.

demand will cause more ISPs to come to market, and will cause large ISPs to develop different offerings for people (of lower quality - what my last employer did). Eventually, this increase of both supply and demand will cause all other free market businesses to become Internet Service Providers just to stay in business, but they won't be able to, and the entire global economy will fail.

That's my theory anyway.

Quitting the job was weird. I've stayed at all of my jobs for long periods of time, and most of my employment termination was because I was moving to school, leaving school, that sort of thing. Once I quit, I realized I had basically no work to do for 2 weeks, and everyone knew I wasn't exactly going to jump up and head a new project. I started cleaning out my machines, and edited the book a bit. It almost felt like everyone was saying "go ahead and fuck off, it's expected of you".

I feel the same way about working a salary job though. In food service or tech support or computer lab jobs, when you're not helping a customer, you're wiping tables or sweeping floors or changing toner cartridges or answering customer e-mail. But when I got into this writing job with salary instead of hourly work and long deadlines, I found that there were unwritten rules about slacking. It was almost expected that you had bad days and good days and it would all average out. I once had an entire week where I did absolutely no writing. I'd come in late, slack, read e-mail, take a long lunch, look at the work, say "fuck it" and leave. But the next week, I slammed the entire project through in 10-hour days, hit before the deadline, and got praise for it. Everyone knew I fucked off, and nobody cared too much, as long as I didn't miss the deadline. It was a completely different feeling for me.

I've recently decided that everyone who posts to usenet news is a complete idiot, myself included. I remember the good old days, when DOS people didn't have any software to post, and the religious and far-right assholes didn't know how to turn on a computer. When you had to use trn or nn,

the bar was set high enough to keep out almost everyone but the intelligent, hard-core discussionists. Now, every one of the 25,000-some newsgroups is hosting a giant war about gun control, the MAKE MONEY FAST virus is spreading across the net on a daily basis, and you can't post anything without some fucking asshole saying it's immoral or immature or satanic.

I've decided that I just can't talk to people anymore, because I'm on the losing end of every major flamewar in existence. I like the Macintosh, I think Unix is better than NT, I hate Microsoft, I'm a liberal, I think guns are stupid, I don't pray to any god and I think that church and state should be separated by a brick wall. So, any time I post anything that has to do with my life, somebody's got to tell me I'm wrong and that I'm doomed and that unless I upgrade to Win95 and buy an AK-47 and vote for Buchanan and bash queers and go to an evangelical church, that Bad Things will happen. Well, bring 'em on. I've got 46 years' worth of Ramen noodles in this apartment, I can probably avoid leaving the house for a long, long time.

I've started drawing. Maybe this is just one of my hobbies that I will adhere to for about a week, but I've found that I enjoy doodling with a nice ink pen for a few minutes or a half hour a day. I don't draw anything intricate, just a lot of random shapes and objects. I like using a roller-ink pen and shading things in great detail, with lots of shadow lines and dots and plenty of texture. I'd like to continue drawing, and maybe even get some cheap oil paints and some canvases and do something weird.

I guess I am jealous of painters and sculptors, because they are surrounded by their work. When a person walks into their house and sees these easels and drop clothes and pottery wheels and stuff, the person knows they're an artist. It must feel good to go to bed and have all of these raw materials and half-complete works of art around you. As a writer, I don't have much beyond a pile of manuscripts, and the raw products are all in my head. A filled canvas just looks so much more complete than a finished first draft - the blank space has been consummated. Of course, I get this feeling sometimes

when I'm writing that I'm working on a giant painting, that every word in the computer is like another brush stroke of paint. Maybe it's cliché, but it gets me closer to finishing these things.

It's now Tuesday night of my last week at this job. Today, I showed up at 11:15, left at 4, and took a 2 hour lunch. Tomorrow, I have an exit interview with "The Cleaner", the HR person who was sent out to the Seattle division from the home office in Ohio, with the express purpose of breaking everyone's balls. I act nice to her in person, but I'm starting a rumor that she met her husband in prison and everyone believes me. She told me to return my employee handbook and benefits handbook to the meeting tomorrow. I think they're afraid that I will bring them to my next job and divulge great secrets of how they do their paid holiday schedule. Just to fuck with her, I changed the spine of the benefits book so it says "TO SERVE MAN". If you're a fan of the old Twilight Zone TV show, you know what's up with that.

There's always some small thing fucking with my life and putting a new drain on my wallet and this time it's my bed. I really need to buy a new bed. My current setup is a twin mattress and box spring sitting on the floor with no frame. The springs started poking up from the mattress, and no one finally got through the cloth, the steel scrapin, into the open. I had to cut open the mattress and jam a piece of a sock into the hole, pushing the curled barb of metal back inside. The temporary fix work but my back is all fucked up because about 4 or 5 of the springs are solid lumps where they are trying to push to freedom, and the entire thing sags like hell in the middle. I need to go buy a new bed, but there are so many problems: how do I move it, what do I do with the old one, where do I shop for one. And I don't have a few hundred dollars to just blow on it. So I just have to wait, and hope the damn thing doesn't get worse before I can trick a friend with a van to take me to a mattress warehouse place.

I had a two year old bed before I moved to Seattle, and I sold it for \$40. It was a very firm mattress, perfect for my back, and was brand new

when I got it. Originally, I planned on moving to Seattle with a carload of stuff, and everything I couldn't sell would be UPSed out later. My car blew up the week before the trip, so I got a U-Haul, brought out all of my shit I hadn't sold, and I took my old bed from my Mom's house. This was probably the first real bed I had, aside from bunk-beds, cribs, and other kiddie-beds. I feel bad replacing it, just because it holds a bunch of memories. It's always strange to lie in this bed and think that it was the same one I used to have at my mom's when I was in junior high and high school. I hid Playboy magazines between the mattresses, and I even lost my virginity in this bed. I also think about all the girlfriends who slept in this bed. For 2 or 3 years after I started college, I had this bad habit of bringing my girlfriends home to meet my parents, so almost all of my former partners up to a certain era had slept in this bed. I eventually realized it wasn't a great tactical move to introduce people to my parents though, so I stopped.

I had the choice this week between buying a new bed and buying a bass guitar. I bought the bass. It's a Fender Precision fretless, a nice red with a white pickguard, single pickup, a couple years old made in the new Fender factory just across the border in Mexico. I don't have an amp, and only have a few documents from the 'net for reference, but I'm re-learning music theory at a decent pace. The circle of fifths and all that crap is the easy part - the hard part is stretching out my hands enough to play a long-scale bass. Re-training them to remember the stuff I was playing five years ago is a little tedious, but at least I have a hobby that doesn't have to do with writing.

Actually, I've got a little music theory tip for you if you are having trouble learning the circle of fifths. See, there was an all-girl dorm at IU called Forest. With that in mind, you can remember the circle of fifths, F C G D A E B, as Forest Chicks Go Down After Every Beer.

My old bass teacher at IU used to use that in lectures, because my class was about 6 or 7 people, all guys. Once, a bunch of music education major people of mixed gender came in to observe his lecture

for credit in some class they were taking. He almost blew it, and then for the rest of the lecture, we all stumbled through the circle of fifths, too embarrassed to use our neat mnemonic device.

The same guy used to give out excused absences for Grateful Dead shows. And he had an all-Black Sabbath class once, we learned NIB, Iron Man, Electric Funeral, and a few other classic, bone-crushing, Ozzy-era bass lines.

I finished the old job last Friday, and had an odd weekend of depression and unsettlement. I moved to Seattle a year ago to start this job, and I've synonymized living here with working at this place. It felt weird this weekend knowing that I wouldn't be driving back there for work Monday morning (or afternoon). I hate the place, but I do have some close friendships there, and I didn't like abandoning this daily routine and support net with these people. I spent the weekend restless with large amounts of general depression, thinking about all of this and sleeping as much as possible. And playing bass.

I started the new job today. When you work at Taco Bell or at a gas station, they basically tell you everything you need to know in about 3 seconds, "There's the cash register and the slurpee machine and the lotto tickets. Now work." In contrast, the corporate job involves total immersion in an endless stream of introductions, names, policies, forms, meetings, tours, network logins, machine setups, security codes, voice mail systems and information, of which you remember about 1%. Everyone seems nice, and the place seems considerably more optimistic than the last. There's just a nervousness about being released in a new environment. I mean, I don't want to show up 2 hours late on my second day, wearing a FUCK GOD TOUR 95 shirt and listening to Anal Cunt in my office. You need to gradually introduce those subtle nuances of your personality over a week or two.

I've probably explained this before, but my life's been very flashback-oriented lately. I don't mean that I did a lot of acid in high school or something, it's just that I think the current era of my

life is boring, and everything reminds me of a few years before, in a time period that I now cherish. I stand on my deck and feel the cool summer air and think of my summers back in Bloomington, and how it was to be on campus, surrounded by people my age hanging out with friends and dating different women and just wandering the streets at night, by foot or in my old car. I don't remember being poor, worrying about grades, being controlled by my parents, having a car that fell apart every other week, or the fact that I felt just as alone in 1992 as I do today. I just remember the good times.

It's all classic grass is greener on the other side stuff. I am glad that I am only remembering most of the good stuff. I went through some hellish episodes, ones that it took a long time to get over. I recently unearthed an audio journal from 1992, and some old notes I wrote to myself around the same time period. They made me remember how it took months, even years to get over a couple of the more harrowing breakups I had that year. It's comforting to know I am finally over a lot of that stuff, and I'm finally at rest with those people.

And I know in two years, I'll be somewhere else wishing I was sitting in my studio apartment in downtown Seattle with nothing to do on a June weeknight. What worries me is that these trigger to these episodes of nostalgia are popping up constantly, and I feel like my current existence is just references to other parts of my life, a giant index of years and eras and apartments and cars and women and jobs. Every day I see a woman that reminds me so much of an ex-girlfriend from college, or listen to a CD or smell a cologne or eat a food that takes me back to some semester of my past. Maybe I'm insane but maybe it's just an overactive memory in full gear.

The depression thing's strange lately, but keeps me thinking. Today's a year since I got my offer letter from Spry and started my move out here. The fourth of July is a year since I pulled into town with a U-Haul filled with everything I owned, starting this entire Seattle chapter of my life. So, I've been evaluating my post-school experience and everything that's happened since the move, and trying to figure out if the net gain has been positive or negative.



I've made some decent progress in the last year. I'm pulling in almost three times as much money, I have benefits like insurance, I have a 'real' job with perks like an office, parking, a phone, and my own computers; I have my own apartment, I'm living in a real city, I have a new computer and a car without major mechanical problems, I am getting caught up on bills, I'm writing more, and my general material well-being is dramatically improved. But even with this major shift, I still find myself depressed, even with a maintenance level of lithium in my blood. I've found that I have traded away many of the aspects of college life, like being around a bunch of single people my age, having the freedom to wander in life, and many of the close friendships that helped me survive. I guess as I settle into corporate life, or some niche outside of it (like the art scene or the writing scene or something), I'll feel a bit better about things.

The one thing that has helped me survive the last year is the fact that I'm not as socially driven as most people, and I really do enjoy time alone. I like to listen to CDs and sit in bed and read for hours and write in my notebooks and work on the computer. Too many people feel a need to always be around SOMEONE. Whenever I socialize with people like that, the content of the meeting is so bland and drab, it's like they are just going through the motions of meeting at a tavern and eating a meal and talking and then leaving, just to have something to do other than to watch TV. I go to a meal to savor the meal, or to sit in a Denny's and write, or to see someone I genuinely want to see. I bet half the failed marriages in the country happen because of people who feel a need to have someone else around the house every day of the week.

Speaking of CDs, I've been buying as many as I can afford. I don't have time to review everything new, but I'll mention some tidbits about the discs that are spending the most time in the player.

I just picked up a copy of Miles Davis: Bitches Brew and I love it! Almost ethereal keyboards throughout by Chick Corea make the background sound eerie and ominous, with Davis's

horn attack the sonic equivalent of a black velvet canvas suddenly covered with crimson red from a shotgun blast. Two discs make this a great value, something to listen to while writing or reading.

Another dual-CD that I've been listening to a lot is the new remaster of Frank Zappa: You Can't Do That on Stage Volume 2, an excellent recording of the 74 show in Helsinki. With a very tight band, FZ tears through old material with precision. I love the impromptu version of the "Finnish Tango", and the great spin on "Montana" called "Whipping Floss".

Back to Chick Corea for a second, I've been listening to Stanley Clarke: Journey to Love a little more than frequently lately, especially the track "Song to John" which features Corea. Clarke is a motherfucker on the bass, and this album features everything from Stan jamming with Jeff Beck, slapping all over "Silly Putty", and playing some upright behind Chick's cool piano sounds.

I'm still spinning a bunch of Chick Corea, especially when I write. It's yuppie-from-hellish, but I do love Electric Band's Beneath the Mask and Eye of the Beholder. Both are discs I've literally played hundreds of times, maybe more than any others in my collection, and are still full of energy and memories.

Jawbreaker: Dear You has also been growing on me lately, it's been a great CD for work. It's also got some real depth behind the poppy sound, the lyrics are really pretty decent after you hear them a few times. It's kinda like a more mature Green Day, without the drug references, obligatory sell-out punk rock bullshit, and other annoyances.

I got a copy of Bloody Mary's Five Years of Blood, Bruises and Balls, a collection of the East coast thrash band's material from the last few albums and demos. It's nice to finally have all that stuff on CD instead of tape, and they sound better than ever.

Lastly, I seem to listen to the Naked Lunch soundtrack and Brian Eno: Ambient 4/On Land every night. The former is a mix of Ornette Coleman doing bop and the London Philharmonic doing dark and moody symphony with a slight Moroccan twist. The latter is Eno at his ambient best, an album that reminds me too much of the summer of 1994 and my

first stumblings with writing a book. It's a great soundtrack to my recent writing efforts, something that needs a steady stream of music to animate the toil and solitude.

More mail's been showing up in the box lately. I like that. Drop a line if you get a chance, paper or electronic, and keep the trades coming. Cool trades lately were I Shot Barbie!, a nice pink mini-digest personal zine, available from Mandy/12 David Drive/Nepean, Ontario/k29 2n1 Canada. It's filled with stories, opinions, and decent writing from Mandy, a girl in high school up in the Great White North. I've also been digging Analgesic Handle, an 11x17 biweekly published by John Fail/2324 Birtley Ave/Pittsburgh, PA 15226-1538. For both, send a trade or stamps (don't send Canadian people US stamps though, silly).

Just another hint that I love long, readable letters and ramblings in the mail, plus trades or any other weird stuff that people send me like catalogs fliers, or whatever. I don't do this thing for money and pay for all the postage and copying myself. So any cool, free stuff I get is a plus - I like being able to read DIY publications instead of having to go out and buy copies of Seventeen and Pregnant Mother to read when conducting my business.

An honorable mention goes to a non-zine trade that epitomizes the kind of stuff I love to get in the mail. I got a copy of a Jack Chick comic that my friend Ray Miller completely blasphemized. Chick tracts are these little comic books with highly evangelical stories about how Catholics and Jews are going to hell, and overly Christian people leave them at bus stops and give them to people at airports and malls. Ray took one and whited out a of the word balloons, filling them with a new sick and twisted plot. THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD is now about human sacrifice, man-boy sex, necrophilia, bestiality in the manger with sheep satanic black masses, and Jesus being crucified because he ripped people off as a crack dealer. I crapped my pants after reading some of his evil and twisted modifications to the bible story.

Speaking of shit, you're probably wondering what's been up with the format of this zine. Since

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you've read this far, I'll explain it. I basically thought the old format got stale, especially since all of the recycled bits were just too, well, recycled. I'm ditching all of my projects except for the books and this, and I wanted to refocus on my own writing and less of the Catholic-like going through the motions with a strict template and style. And if you are a regular reader and you didn't get a copy of issue #4, it's because it sucked. There was so little mail that month, and I didn't have time or patience to write any new articles, especially with all of this job bullshit and my trip to CA. Yes, there was an issue #4. No, I didn't send out many of them. If you're really freaked over not getting a copy, send a SASE or a trade (a really shitty trade, so I don't rip you off) and I'll send a copy.

And I've managed to get through 5 issues without explaining the title. In comparison, Slate, the Microsoft piece of shit excuse to cash in on the web-zine frenzy, spent about half of their damned first issue explaining their title. Of course, they published about 10 years late, and everyone assumed the title was S'Late. I assumed it was called Slate because it would go over like a rock. I checked it out, it's basically a bunch of editors all on the Microsoft payroll sucking each others' dicks. Typical.

There's a new Bukowski book out, it's called Betting on the Muse. It's a hefty posthumous collection of mostly poetry, with a few short stories thrown in for variety. I've always found Buk's poetry from the late 70s/early 80s his most entertaining, with funny jokes and odd stories about the horses, the women, the booze. Poems about Bukowski showing up drunk at a highbrow literary party, hitting on all the professors' wives, and then puking in somebody's car just seemed to have a great entertainment value to them.

But let's face it, the writing in his older stuff was spotty at best. It was accessible, and flowed at the readings, but it wasn't exactly Chaucer. Well, this new book's got a lot of stuff from Bukowski right before he passed away, stuff that's really matured and strengthened. It's his best book yet, in my opinion, with some of the humor but also a side of seriousness from a man who knew

he only had a few years left on his limit. Incredible stuff.

Incidentally, Charles Bukowski used a Macintosh.

I got an email the other day from an old ex-girlfriend, telling me she was moving to England to marry some guy. I'm not heartbroken over this, I don't entirely like the woman or miss the time I spent with her (which was mostly spent arguing over dumb stuff like if Astrology was an accredited science you could get a PhD in), but I found humor in the letter.

Okay, if you're my friend, you probably know who this woman is (who will remain nameless so I don't get sued). Not only that, but you probably have your own story of horror having to do with her. I thought about this, and realized that she's this weird focal point in most of my friendships, this person that almost all of my friends from Indiana have had bad dealings with. My friends Jen and Bill remember when I brought her to a dinner get-together at their place and she got irate when they didn't have Diet Coke at their house. Steve had her in a music theory class he TA'ed, and she drove him nuts; he pissed her off by making fun of her during a lecture, something that earned him bonus points in my book. My friend Andrea knows her because Andrea answers email for the computing center at IU, and got this long back-and-forth stream of bullshit between this woman and one of her ex-boyfriends, where she was playing mental games with him and wanted to sue him for harassment because he sent an email asking for some of his shit back or something. This woman stole a guy away from my friend Angie, so Angie broke into her VAX account (it had a pathetically obvious password) and deleted all of her stuff. Both of my friends Tom and Ray met her when we were still dating, and both tried to hit me in the head with a brick to knock some sense with me. My friend Larry met her years later, and hit me in the head with a brick, as a retroactive lesson in my stupidity.

Anyway, the whole thing is funny, because she announces annually that she's moving to England to get married. I've got a note she posted on

an IU newsgroup in 1992, announcing an "everything must go - I'm moving to England soon" sale she was having. She thinks England is some perfect world because she's from the east coast and is too pretentious and snooty for this country, so she hook up with guys over the computer and then tries to weasel her way over there. I guess they wise up and dump her, and she repeats the cycle over there.

Sometimes, I realize I've done a lot of stupid things in my short lifetime.

I'd like to see a "What's on your Linux machine" ad series. Too bad nobody famous uses Linux on their computers. Well, I'm sure a lot of famous geek-types do, but nobody like Dennis Rodman or Patty Smith or anything.

Here's what my ad would look like:

- the Slackware distribution from last January
- backups of all of my email from 1992-present
- backups of the accounts I've abandoned at IU and Spry
- a new ispell dictionary with all the naughty word added
- the following books in various stages of completion:
 - Rumored to Exist
 - Starting Rumors (a critical analysis of above)
 - Summer Rain (several drafts)
 - Next book, currently untitled
 - Sound Advice for the Insane (chapbook)
- an unofficial transcript of my time at IU (BGS, 2.141 GPA)
- an old resume
- my 8-line C game
- about 2 megs of pornography
- edb, the emacs database
- a shitload of other writing, short pieces, Metal Curse columns, and other ramblings
- a copy of Netscape
- three versions of the game empire, some tools, and my patches

There's probably other stuff. I don't install too much shit these days, it's mostly all writing and email.



I checked the old journals again, and a year

ago, I sat in my Mom's kitchen, with a full U-Haul in the driveway, ready to leave Indiana. I equated the split from Indiana as another book in my life, a close to the long series of chapters I labeled "The College Experience". When I was at her house, before I headed out to Seattle, I thought about the time in 1989 when I packed up everything I owned and got ready to jump into the unknown, and close the book I lived called High School.

Moving to Seattle was one of the biggest leaps of faith I ever took, something I did unsupervised and on my own. When I went to college, there was the in loco parentis guidance of the school and the dorms and everything else, so moving down there was a big emotional change, but not as much of a sink or swim experience. When I headed west, I had to find the truck and plan the move and find the job and find the apartment and sell the car and get the money and do everything else on my own.

And I left behind a lot. When I went to college, only three or four of my friendships survived in one way or another. Leaving college meant the split of dozens of relationships, people I'd lose touch with or never hear from again. Some weren't bad, but other were pretty painful. Some relationships really needed closure they didn't get, and other loose ends had to stay loose forever.

But I've learned you need to make sacrifices to get stuff done. Since I moved here, a lot has happened to me, the job, the material stuff, the writing, and the changes to my personality and mind. But mostly, I know I've risen above the conditions that trapped me a year ago. I'm not a minority in a society falling apart, I actually feel more comfortable being myself. And I finally live somewhere that I'm proud to call my home.

And I need to thank all of you who have helped me since I started this new book of my life, both the new people I've met, and the people who have carried over from my last life far away in Bloomington, Indiana. The communication, support, and friendship has really made a difference.

And on the last night of my first year here, I went to the movies with my friend Virginia, and blew off doing my laundry by another day, and drove to Mountlake Terrace with her, while we

killed time until the 9:50 show. 244th Street SW tunneled through the thick green landscape, with the mountains in the distance, and I remembered the morning I woke up in Bill's apartment after driving for 40 hours straight. He was at work, and I showered, got my headphones, and walked through the same beautiful July scenery. With the tape player spinning a Pearl Jam album (most of my tapes were packed, so I bought a bunch of \$2 tapes at a gas station in Minnesota), I strolled to the Dairy Queen, walking out the kinks from the trip and breathing the fresh air to wash away the caffeine sickness and insomnia.

I looked at the beautiful blue sky, and felt the cool Northwest air, knowing for the first time, it was my home.

When we walked out of the film, my watch said 7/1 and my first year in Seattle ended. And now, the second begins.

NOTICE

AND SO ON

This portion of the ticket should be retained as evidence of your journey.

Thanks for checking out this issue, I hope you liked the new format with more new writing. It's been a lot more work, but a pretty satisfying task to come up with more original material instead of just recycling email and journals. Anyway, keep the letters and trades coming, and I hope to have another issue done in August, after my fun holidays and travels.

Colophon: I edited all of the text for this issue in Emacs on a Linux machine. The whole thing was laid out on a Macintosh using WordPerfect 3.5. The title was assembled by hand. No Microsoft products were used in the authoring, layout, or production of this zine. FUCK BILL GATES AND MICROSOFT!

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Send all comments, details, ideas, praise, hate mail, trades, review material, and long diatribes about why I'm going to hell to:

Jon Konrath 600 7th Ave #520 Seattle, WA 98104-1933 (206) 343-5604 jkonrath@speakeasy.org
<http://www.speakeasy.org/~jkonrath/>

Air in the Paragraph Line is published monthly, within a few days of the beginning of the month. Issues are a dollar or postage or trade or some other form of gratuity. Back issues are available at the same price. Issues are free to prisoners, lumberjacks the mentally ill, serial killers, and employees of the government of Estonia. Trades are more welcome than money or anything else except maybe sex, first edition books, or Motorhead CDs. Book, comic, music, zine, or female undergarment submissions for review are welcome. I review all food, pornography, and computer hardware that is sent to me. Sorry, no ads or unsolicited submissions. Solicitation by submission, however, is welcome. I support the environment, this was printed on 100% recycled extinct spotted owl skin.

Thanks to Ray Miller, Tom Sample, Larry Falli, Andrea Donderi, and the Coca-Cola Company. No thanks to Evergreen Ford in Issaquah.

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Also makes a great dip for chicken wings.

THE STAGE DIRECTIONS READ: "They decide to go out and enjoy fire-continue necking... they resume may I make a few suggestions? and, finally, "Tony kisses Claire, can watch the ones launched way down her body. Claire attai', and then the ones launched ceal her growing frenzy... on the n. If you can do the watching stasy." Meanwhile, on stage, we se e, for Christ's sake, stay home. Claire demonstrating what I lik ky and act like an asshole at Lysander Technique. The Lysander ay? Or you can walk to Gas-is named for the scene in A Edwards Park, just leave dogs *Night's Dream* where Lysander sj a sitter. If you're bringing a three pages actively wooing Hele: ighn that the kid is too young to rebuffs him. In bad productions o ics), please don't let it be one speare farce, Lysander stands ne igned mini-motor-home prams ject of his wanton lusts and, becaug sunroof. If you insist on dri-or the director couldn't think of a ig up my neighborhood, park-ier, kisses up and down her arm, tstreet having tailgate parties—her arm, up and down her arm, r car alarm. Can't you just use Addams. Very sexy. (Not.) nething? And if you do drive

CompuServe has contracted
personal problems